

THE JOURNAL



OF THE PACIFIC COAST NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

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PCNS CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

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JULY 29, 1987 - WEDNESDAY - 8:00 PM
TOPIC: COINAGE OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT
SPEAKER: STEPHEN M. HUSTON

AUGUST 26, 1987 - WEDNESDAY - 8:00 PM
TOPIC: ARCHAIC ELECTRUM ISSUES OF ASIA
MINOR
SPEAKER: BILL HENRY

SEPTEMBER 30, 1987 - WEDNESDAY - 8:00 PM
GREAT WHITE ELEPHANT SALE

MONTHLY MEETINGS ARE HELD AT THE TELEPHONE
MUSEUM, 1145 LARKIN STREET AT BUSH, SAN
FRANCISCO. GUESTS ARE INVITED.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by David F. Cieniewicz



After a year of planning and work, the 80th CSNA Convention is now history. I would like once again to thank all the PCNS members and spouses who made it possible. Also, I would like to acknowledge and thank members of the Liberty Numismatic Society for maintaining the registration desk again this year. We were asked, we responded, and we succeeded. Thank you, one and all.

The end of May witnessed the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge. According to local newspapers, over 800,000 people turned out for the bridge celebration on May 24. Impressive indeed, but I wonder how many of those 800,000 individuals, or even how many numismatists, can identify with the significant numismatic event that occurred in San Francisco 50 years ago, May 15, 1937. The event I am referring to is the opening of the third mint facility in the history of San Francisco. This structure is what we know today as the San Francisco Assay Office. Hopefully, the gala celebration of the bridge and the first striking of the Constitution commemorative coins later this year will not totally overshadow this occasion.

Speaking of celebrations and anniversaries, some initial thought has been given to the 75th anniversary of the founding of PCNS. At my request, a preliminary report was provided by O.L. Wallis and Herb Miles suggesting various ways in which we might celebrate this event that will occur in 1990. If any members have any thoughts, photographs, or nostalgic items that the Society could borrow for this celebration, please contact any of the PCNS officers. Additional details will be provided in future bulletins.

I would like to wish everyone a very happy, healthy and safe summer. While relaxing on vacation this year, give some thought to penning a short article for The Journal. Have a nice summer.

A handwritten signature in dark ink. The signature is stylized, starting with a large 'D' and 'C' that are connected, followed by 'F' and 'Cieniewicz'. The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and flourishes.

ANCIENT ATHENS: 800-479 B.C.

By William D. Henry

The city of Athens, named for the goddess Athena, was the largest village in Attica, a section of central Greece with an area of approximately one thousand square miles. Originally, the village was a large number of small dwellings clustered around the citadel which would much later be known as the Acropolis. As the community grew in size and influence, it became recognized as a separate entity known as the Greek city-state of Athens-Attica. The date was approximately 800 B.C.

During this period, many such city-states developed in mainland Greece and the surrounding islands of the Aegean, Ionian and Mediterranean seas. Because of their proximity and a common language, all considered themselves to be Greek, but several factors kept them divided. Not only the region's geography, but also a diversity of economic and political interests, as well as differing tribal and ethnic backgrounds, prevented unification of the city-states into a national force.

Early in Athens' existence, a small number of wealthy landholders of the fertile plains area controlled the entire region with an aristocratic form of government ruled by archons selected from within their ranks. All but the wealthy were dissatisfied with a system which allowed the entire population to be governed by a few aristocrats.

In an attempt to salve over the discontent, the ruling archons commissioned the lawgiver Draco to set down a system of laws. His code, issued about 620 B.C., did very little to relieve the plight of the people. It left the upper class in full control of the courts and allowed them to interpret the laws to their own best interests. Along with the new laws, Draco listed punishments for transgression which were so severe that his name is still synonymous with cruel and unnecessarily severe penalties. The situation in Athens deteriorated to the point of near open rebellion against the aristocrats and their ruling archons.

In 594 B.C., Solon, a successful merchant with far-flung interests and a reputation for impeccable integrity, was granted dictatorial powers to establish a new constitution in an attempt to restore stability to the state. The poorest class respected and admired Solon. The middle class was the first to acclaim him as the most able for the job. The upper class consented to his selection because its members believed that a person of his means would be prejudiced in their favor.

The constitution and reforms of Solon were so sweeping that all classes were affected. All citizens, rich and poor alike, were subjected to the same restraints and the same penalties. He set a limit on the amount of land any one person or family could control. Trial by a people's jury replaced the judgments pre-

viously handed down by the archons. An assembly of four hundred citizens was established as the ruling body with representatives from all geographic areas and all economic classes. Thus, the seeds of the first democracy were sown.

It was around the time of Draco's contribution (or slightly preceding it) that coinage was invented in Lydia, a small country in western Asia Minor. The success and acceptance of these earliest of crude electrum issues was such that the nearby sea-coast Ionian cities of Ephesus, and soon Miletus, began minting their own issues, also of electrum, a naturally occurring mixture of gold and silver found in local streams in alluvial deposits.

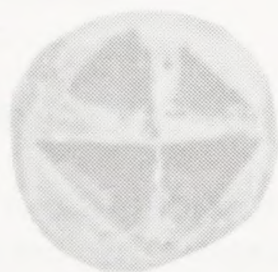
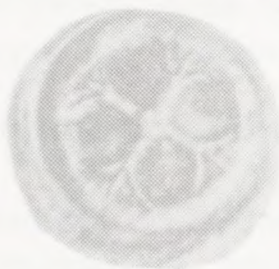
In 572 B.C., Solon retired from public office. From the partial vacuum created by Solon's absence, Pisistratus, a wealthy aristocrat by birth, emerged as leader of the lower classes. As an apparent traitor to the aristocrats, Pisistratus feared for his safety. He appeared before the Assembly and requested a bodyguard of fifty men to protect his person. Once granted this protection, he increased the number to five hundred, with which he soon dominated the entire state. He proclaimed himself Athens' dictator or tyrant. He served Attica well in that capacity; what we now call a "big city political boss", Pisistratus followed the Solonian constitution. With the exception of now having a tyrant, Athens generally was able to follow the course laid out by Solon before his retirement.

WAPPENMUNZEN

Bull's head

Wheel

Typical Reverse



By exposure through normal trade channels, the original coinages of Lydia and Ionia spread rather widely during the 6th Century B.C. Aegina, an intense economic rival of Athens, was probably the first western Greek settlement to begin minting its own coinage. Silver staters of about 12.3 grams, bearing the civic symbol of the Aeginitic turtle, were quickly followed by mintages from Athens and other Greek city-states. Pisistratus was responsible for issuing the first Athenian currency. These earliest coins were struck in silver around 540 B.C., were archaic in style, and are usually referred to as "Wappenmunzen" or heraldic coins. Originally, the obverses of these tetradrachms and fractions down to an obol were thought to represent the families of the aristocracy. The now prevalent view is that these obverse wheels, amphorae, and animals with incuse reverses were of some religious significance, as Pisistratus was not a friend of the wealthy class.

Pisistratus died in 527 B.C., and one of his sons, Hippias, became the power behind the government. Wisely, he continued the policies of his father for the following thirteen years. During this period, he introduced the first famous "owl" coinages which began the stabilization of Athenian currency. The first issues of the owl silver tetradrachms were very archaic in style with Athena portrayed on the obverse wearing a crested but otherwise unadorned helmet. The famous owl was on the reverse with an olive spray and the city's name, AΘE, all in an incused square. The profile of Athena's head faced right, but the eye was almond shaped as though the sculptor were viewing the head straight-on. The weight standard was set at 17.5 grams.



ORIGINAL OWL COINAGE

Athena head with unadorned helmet

Owl with Olive spray

All photos of Athenian coinage are enlargments.

During 514 B.C., a conspiracy against Hippias frightened him into a regime of terror and repression. The Athenians simply would not tolerate such harsh measures. Fearing for the safety of his family, Hippias accepted abdication and exile to Persia where he was welcomed by King Darius I.

Subsequently, the Ionian Greek cities and nearby islands revolted against the domination of the Persian Empire. The aid of the mainland Greeks was solicited. Sparta refused to assist, but Eretria and Athens sent squadrons to help with the rebellion. They attacked and burned Sardis, the capitol of Lydia. With this victory, the Athenians and Eretrians felt the rebellion to be a success and sailed for home. Their incursion into Persian internal affairs infuriated Darius who vowed to avenge this act.

After quelling the revolt, Darius granted liberal constitutions to the Ionians in order to satisfy their main grievance. He then felt it time to mount an attack against Eretria and Athens. Hippias suggested the landing of a force at Marathon in northeastern Attica to prevent the Athenians from coming to the aid of Eretria which the main Persian army wanted to conquer first.

Athens heard of the Persian landing at Marathon and sent her army there while sending word to Sparta seeking that city's help. Sparta agreed to assist, but, for religious reasons, not until after the next full moon.

The Athenian troops occupied a pass overlooking the plain of Marathon and awaited the arrival of help from Sparta. The Persians delayed their attack to await their main body of troops after the defeat of Eretria. Thus, a stalemate developed while both sides waited for reinforcements.

Finally, word was received that Eretria had fallen and that the Persians would soon be reinforced. With or without the Spartans, the Athenians troops had to attack, then or never. The outnumbered Athenians did attack, and the Persians were pushed back to their boats, leaving more than six thousand dead. Athens' glory and prestige were at a new high, for this was the first known defeat of a hitherto invincible force, and it was done with no outside assistance.

It is believed by many that the crescent moon on the reverse of the Athenian owl coinages was meant to commemorate the victory at Marathon. The moon, perhaps, refers to the fact that Marathon was fought without the help of Sparta, as they had refused to fight until after the next full moon. Be that as it may, upon looking at these owl reverses one cannot fail but recall the first defeat of the Persians at Marathon. Remembered too is Pheidippides, the warrior who, after a full day of battle, raced the twenty six miles to Athens to deliver the great news and who then expired immediately after gasping out the message (a lesson to all marathon runners here).



Owl Reverse with Crescent Moon Added

Darius was more determined than ever to overcome Athens and to conquer all of Hellas. All Greeks knew that the Persians would come in full force the next time and that they must unite with their neighboring states, as well as come up with a navy which could challenge that of the Persians.

Fortunately for the Greeks, they were given ample time to make these preparations, as Darius was forced to attend to internal problems in Egypt. Another delay was caused by the death of Darius in 486 B.C. He was succeeded by his son, Xerxes I, who settled the Egyptian problem and then began assembling the largest invasion force the world had ever seen.

Themistocles, an able statesman and an advocate of seapower, rose to prominence in Athens in the years following Marathon. He believed that Athens' destiny would depend commercially and militarily upon sea supremacy. Accordingly, he diverted the wealth captured at Marathon and the output of the silver mines at Laurium into the building of new ships and a harbor at Piraeus. During this ten year interval, a myriad of silver "owl" coins were minted to pay the construction costs.

In the early Spring of 480 B.C., Xerxes' vast expedition embarked from Asia Minor. The navy hugged the seacoast to augment and supply the land forces which crossed the Hellespont, marched through Thrace, Macedonia, and southward into Thessaly. The central and southern Greeks, united for the first time, dispatched their navy northward to engage the Persian armada. The Greek land forces, under the Spartan commander, Leonidas, chose to make a stand at the narrow pass of Thermopylae.

Three hundred Spartans and eleven hundred Laconians remained with Leonidas to cover the southward retreat of the main body. A battle of epic proportions developed at the pass. When the Persian forces were led around so as to attack the rear, their position became untenable. Three hundred Spartans left their fortified position to attack the massed Persians in hand-to-hand combat and were slain to the last man. Their sacrifice did inflict severe losses on the enemy, and the Laconians were able to retreat safely with the main body of troops.

The allied Greek navy engaged the twelve hundred vessel Persian armada at Artemesium, off the northern coast of Euboea. A day-long battle was fought to a stalemate. When the navy heard of the breakthrough at Thermopylae, they sailed southward to Salamis in order to provide a refuge for the Athenians who would surely have to evacuate their doomed city. The Athenians did flee to Salamis and Aegina, and when Xerxes reached Athens, he pillaged an almost deserted city.

The second naval engagement occurred in the narrow straits separating the small island of Salamis from the western Attica coast. The Persians were at a great disadvantage in those confined waters, and the Greeks inflicted a crushing defeat at Salamis. The remnants of the Persian navy sailed homeward in disgrace.

Lacking naval support, Xerxes had to curtail his land forces and left only the best third of his fighting men under Mardonius to spend the Winter of 480-79 in Greece. With the majority of his army, Xerxes returned to Susa in humiliation.

Under the command of the Spartan general, Pausanias, the Greeks met and soundly defeated the remaining Persians on the plains of Plataea, in August of 479. At about the same time, the Athenian navy annihilated the remnants of the Persian fleet off the coast of Mycale. These two engagements gave the finishing touches to the Greco-Persian War, freed the Ionian Greek settlements from Persian domination, opened the entire Mediterranean to Greek trade, and marked the beginnings of the "Golden Age of Greece".

Ornamented Helmet on Athena
Added after the Victories of 479 BC



To commemorate their victories, the obverse of the owl coinage was changed to include olive leaves as an adornment to Athena's helmet. Vast quantities of these coins were minted to finance the public buildings of the Acropolis and to facilitate the rapidly-expanding commerce of Attica. Because of its uniformity, constant weight and distinct style, this coinage was universally accepted throughout the entire Mediterranean basin. It remained largely unchanged excepting that Athena's eye began to appear in true profile about 393 B.C.

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SOME THOUGHTS FROM OUR READERS . . .

In ancient times barbarians were thought to be those who did not speak your language, worship your god, or live in a society similar to your own.

Today the people of our planet continue to disregard the mistakes of the past which have been documented by historians and attested to by archaeological finds, among which ancient coinages are the most prolific.

Being an American, my native language, my religion, and my country's modified democratic government are all alien to the people who now inhabit the areas where coins originated. My hope is that some numismatists in those areas would care to exchange notes with a fellow barbarian. As a beginning we have at least two things in common - barbarianism and an interest in ancient coins.

While our libraries and universities provide irreplaceable sources for research on mankind's past struggles, contacts with fellow collectors might help us to understand each other and even appreciate the differences existing between our cultures.

The coins most interesting to me are my early examples of ancient Lydia continuing through the world coinages of the first century of the Christian Era. The failures of past monarchies, democracies, aristocracies, and tyrannies seem to be documented through those first seven centuries of coinages.

Our American constitution guarantees my right to disagree publicly with our elected officials and I disagree with our present administration on many issues. However, my ignorance is appalling concerning those who do not strive for international peaceful co-existence. These two statements are made to assure that the door is open to any who would like to establish contact and exchange views with a fellow barbarian.

William D. Henry
216 Tono Lane
Walnut Creek, CA 94596 USA

Many complain of the problems with grading standards of some companies selling coins through the mail. After years of experience and trial and error, I've concluded that the problem does not lie with the dealer, but rather with the collector who simply does not understand the terms and abbreviations used. For example, "BU" means "buffed-up". Also, "ex fine" means the coin used to be fine, until they got a hold of it.

Keeping in mind these and other commonly used abbreviations, the average collector can order through the mail with confidence and not be disappointed time after time when his coins arrive.

David Blasczak
Clyde, NY

(In other correspondence, Mr. Blaszczak informs us that the signer of the Notice of Protest which appeared in April's Journal, Benjamin M. van der Veer, has been identified by a local historian in the town of Clyde, New York, from which the notice was issued. Mr. van der Veer was a prominent citizen in that community, having been elected Mayor in 1841 and ultimately living to the age of ninety. - Ed.)



LITERARY COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The results of the 1987 PCNS Literary Competition were announced at the Society's annual banquet, held June 27:

First Place - Silver Medal

Rick Webster: "An Intoduction to the Celts and Their Coinage"

Second Place - Bronze Medal

David W. Lange: "A Love Token Revealed"

Honorable Mentions

Q. David Bowers: "Acres of Diamonds"

Bill Fivaz: "Grading Tips"

Fred van den Haak: "Boordgeld"

Stephen M. Huston: "In the Year of the Commet"

David W. Lange: "Sunny Jim and the '12-S Nickel"

Jerry F. Schimmel: "San Francisco Through Its Tokens"

The Journal is presently soliciting new manuscripts for consideration of publication. Bear in mind that the entries for 1988's Literary Competition will be those newly published articles which appear in The Journal from July of this year through April 1988. Contact the editor soon so that your work may be published in time. Complete competition rules appear in issue number 4 of The Journal.

THE AMERICAN PLANTATION TOKEN: A SHORT HISTORY

by Carol M. Fiese

This short article is an attempt to familiarize us with a little known coin of the American Colonies, "The American Plantation Token". It has been named a plantation token because it is believed to have circulated mainly in the southern colonies. It has even been called a Florida token by some. A plate of this pieces may be found in the "Redbook" on page 18. (1)

Why should we be so concerned with this token? There are three reasons: 1) It is an unusual piece, as it was struck in nearly pure tin; 2) It is the first authorized coinage for the British Colonies in America; 3) It is the only coin made for use in the colonies with the Spanish denomination of 1/24 part real, equal to a British Farthing. It was hoped that the Spanish denomination would make the coin more acceptable to people. However, this was not the case.

The obverse of the American Plantation Token depicts King James II of Great Britain on horesback with the latin legend "JACOBUS II D.G. MAG. BRI. FRAN. ET HIB. REX". On the reverse, thre are four heraldic shields connected by chains with the Latin legend "HISPAN VAL 24 PART REAL". There are both originals and restrikes of these pieces. The originals were struck c. 1688, and the more common restrikes were struck c. 1828.

These fascinating tin coins came to be when a royal patent was granted to a man named Holt, a British tin producer, to coin this issue for the colonies. It is believed that the dies for these pieces were engraved by one John Roettier. Over a century later, Mr. Roettier's descendants sold the coin dies to the British coin dealer Matthew Young of London who, in 1828, produced three different die varieties of restrikes. These restrikes were then distributed by London coin dealers W. S. Lincoln and Son. It is most unfortunate that little more is known about the history of these pieces.

There are several different varieties of the American Plantation Token which will not be covered here. However, we will discern between originals and restrikes. (Please note that the following guidelines are simply rules of thumb):

On the originals, the head of James II is normally directly under the G. of MAG. in the obverse legend. The exception here is the rare "Sideways 4" variety which is believed to be an original (c.1688), but the head of the king is between the G of MAG. and the B of BRI. Also, the restrikes are lighter in color and have smoother, less corroded surfaces than the originals, tin corroding easily.

(Continued on page 19)

1. R.S. Yeoman, A Guide Book of United States Coins 39th Edition, Western Publishing Co., Inc., Racine, WI, 1985.

AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN COMMEMORATIVES

by David W. Lange, NLG

The popularity of United States commemorative coins, while being subject to the fever of speculation, has generally witnessed a steady growth. In the past 5 years, the United States Mint has catered to this taste with a succession of new issues coined in silver, gold, and cupro-nickel. This conscious effort by the Treasury Department to tap the numismatic market has produced some highly variable results, the controversial designs for the Constitution Bicentennial issues signaling the nadir of sculptural art. Amidst all this lusting for new coins to buy, sell, collect, promote and abuse are routinely overlooked a series of United States commemorative coins struck more than fifty years ago. These are the three coins issued in 1936 to mark the establishment of the Commonwealth of the Philippines.

The existence of these coins is no secret. They appear with little fanfare on page 264 of the ubiquitous Red Book (1). Although illustrated and priced, the two one-peso coins and the one fifty-centavos coin receive little in the way of expository notes, stating only that they are issues of the "Philippines under Sovereignty of the U.S.". What exactly this means is left to the reader's imagination.

The exact nature of these coins may be ascertained by looking at the history of the Philippines during the period in which the islands became a possession of the USA. The victory of Commodore George Dewey over the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay in May of 1898 hastened the end of that brief but rousing adventure known as the Spanish-American War. By the Treaty of Paris, signed by Spain and the United States in 1899, the former ceded to this country its long held possession of the Philippine Islands. Establishment of a civilian government in the region was delayed while the United States fought a guerilla war against Filipino insurrectionists seeking total independence. The rebellion ceased following the capture of its leader, Emilio Aguinaldo, in 1901.

A civilian government was shortly established under the direction of the the Philippine Commission. The Philippine Organic Act of 1902 created a government structured in a manner similar to that of the United States, with two houses and a governor-general as head administrator. The first person to hold this office was William H. Taft, later to be President of the United States. While frequently referred to as a "territory" of the USA, the Philippines never fit this role in a strict definition of the term. (2)

It was decided that the Spanish coinage in circulation would be retired and a more desirable substitution made. Initial efforts involved the importation of regular issue United States coins, a move that failed when it was determined that the American denominations were of too great a value for the simple

and poor economy of the islands. A legacy of this experiment survives in the unusual availability of higher grade dimes and half dollars of the San Francisco Mint dated 1900. It was these coins that were sent to the Philippines only to be withdrawn and subsequently hoarded by the local population. For some years following the Second World War, many were returned to their homeland by dealers, collectors, and immigrants, making attractive specimens available in the marketplace.

The ultimate solution to the coinage question was found in the creation of a unique and separate series for the Philippines. These issues, coined at Philadelphia and San Francisco beginning in 1903, were based upon a one peso piece of silver, coined to the same specifications as the USA silver dollar and exchangeable for the latter at the legal par value of two for one. Fractional pieces were also coined in values of fifty, twenty, and ten centavos. These were proportional in weight and fineness to the one peso coin. A rapid increase in the price of silver would soon alter this perfect balance, nevertheless, the coinage for the Philippines remained a marked success and possessed the added advantage of corresponding more directly with the familiar Spanish coins than did regular United States coinage.

For small purchases, a five centavos piece of cupro-nickel and one centavo and half centavo pieces of bronze were also coined. While the half centavos were retired early on due to their unpopularity, the minor coins generally served as a useful supplement to the silver issues and remained in circulation until comparatively recent times.

All of the coins in this series carried the dual legends of "FILIPINAS" and "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA". While acknowledging that these issues did not circulate outside of the Philippines, this writer contends that their legal convertability to American money and their display of the nation's identity establish this series as United States coinage and that they deserve recognition as such. This thesis is essential in identifying the Commonwealth coinage of 1936 as "America's forgotten commemoratives".

From the beginning of the United States presence in the Philippines, it was the goal of Congress to establish democracy and independence for the Filipino people while continuing to play a diplomatic and military role in the region. As no such heritage of democratic ideals had existed under Spanish rule, the process of educating the Filipinos in the concept of democracy was a slow one. It was not until 1934 with the passing of the Tydings-McDuffie Act that the hope of the Filipinos for independence began to be realized. This legislation called for the creation of a Commonwealth of the Philippines, a sort of "half-way house" for the islands on the road to complete autonomy. The Philippines would be granted full independence after ten years during which time the islands would be permitted self government in all matters excepting foreign affairs. (3)

Providentially, the establishment of commonwealth status for the Philippines coincided with a speculative fever centering on

United States commemorative coins. More than a dozen half dollar types were issued in 1936 alone. It was in this year that the three coins commemorating the Commonwealth of the Philippines were struck. Two one-peso pieces and a single fifty centavos coin were offered at \$3.13 per set of three. (4)



Fifty centavos - facing busts of Murphy and Quezon. The reverse depicts the arms of the Commonwealth of the Philippines and is common to the three coins in this series.

These issues were designed by Ambrosio Morales, Professor in Fine Arts at the University of the Philippines. Featured on the obverse of the fifty centavo coin are the facing busts of Frank Murphy, last governor general of the Philippines, and Manuel Quezon, first president of the Commonwealth. Encircling these are the legend COMMONWEALTH OF THE PHILIPPINES and the denomination FIFTY CENTAVOS. A radiant sun appears between the two men and bears the date NOVEMBER 15 1935 marking the adoption of the new Constitution which formally established the Commonwealth. The reverse displays the new coat of arms featuring elements depicting the various authorities which had presided over the islands. In the center appears a shield bearing the three stars of the short lived and never recognized Philippine Republic, 1899-1901. Superimposed on the shield is a medallion which bears a lion-headed serpent underneath a castle, reflecting Spain's rule of more than 300 years from the Sixteenth Century up to 1899. The legend COMMONWEALTH OF THE PHILIPPINES is displayed on a banner beneath the shield. Surmounting all is the national eagle of the USA with wings outstretched in its role as protector. Around the periphery is the legend UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. The date of issue, 1936, is at the bottom, and a small letter M may be found at the lower left identifying these coins as products of the United States Mint at Manila, P.I., opened in 1920.

The obverses of the two one-peso coins each bear a pair of conjoined busts facing left. Murphy and Quezon appear on the one issue, and President of the United States Franklin Roosevelt and Quezon are featured on the other. Both issues carry the commemorative date NOV. 15 1935, the legend COMMONWEALTH OF THE PHILIPPINES and the denomination ONE PESO. The reverse design is that which appears on the fifty centavos coin of the series and on all regular issues commencing with the coinage of 1937.

The one peso coins were minted with a total of 10,000 pieces each, while the fifty centavos issue had a coinage of 20,000 pieces. These figures, which are fairly representative of U.S. commemorative issues during this period, are somewhat misleading to collectors with regard to the availability of the coins. The collapse of the "bull market" in commemorative coins, coming as it did in 1937, affected the sales of the Commonwealth coins. With their peculiar "foreign" status, the three-coin sets were especially susceptible to a flagging interest in new commemorative issues. While the exact number of pieces sold at issue is unknown to this writer, it is evident that a quantity remained unsold in the Philippine Treasury. Although unimagined at the time, these unwanted souvenirs would soon meet an ignominious fate along with millions of their regular issue brethren.

One peso coin featuring busts of Governor General Frank Murphy (left) and President Manuel Quezon.



The attack upon and subsequent invasion of the Philippines by Japanese forces in 1941 precipitated a major crisis in the islands. (5) Ill prepared for the enemy advance, American and Filipino defenders were repeatedly driven further back into the interior. With the fall of the Philippines seemingly inevitable, preparations were undertaken to minimize the material gains that might be enjoyed by the enemy. In February 1942, the submarine U.S.S. Trout offloaded its cargo of ammunition for the Allied troops and took aboard a most unusual lading for the return trip to Pearl Harbor. A quantity of gold bullion and, in addition, eighteen tons of silver were stowed within her and spirited away. (6)

The fall of Manila was preceded by the withdrawal to Bataan of the remaining assets of the Philippine Treasury. Currency and other negotiable paper were destroyed by setting fire to it. The recovered silver, nearly sixteen million pesos worth of coins, was dumped into Caballo Bay off the island of Corregidor. It was here that the Allied defenders took their last stand before exhaustion and hunger led to surrender and the infamous Bataan Death March.

Japanese efforts to recover the sunken fortune were largely unsuccessful, and it remained until after the War's conclusion for the coins to be recovered by U.S. Navy divers and commercial salvors. Only about three-fourths of the coins placed in the safekeeping of Neptune were ever recovered.

Although the bulk of the pieces that had been dumped into the sea were pesos of the regular type dated 1907-S, 1908-S, and 1909-S, the surviving population of Commonwealth Commemoratives

includes a very large percentage of pieces severely corroded from prolonged submersion in saltwater. Basso reports that an estimated 3000 to 4000 sets were jettisoned to prevent capture in 1942. (7) Based upon marketplace availability, more than half of the commemoratives show evidence of harsh cleaning to remove the black encrustation which characterizes these "sea-salvaged" pieces. The number of undamaged, mint state specimens extant is surprisingly small when compared to commemorative half dollars of this era in similar condition. It is only the perception of these issues as foreign coins which keeps their prices at affordable levels.



One peso coin with busts of Franklin D. Roosevelt (left) and Quezon. The three commemoratives were coined to the revised standards established in 1907. The one peso pieces were of .800 fine silver and weighed 308.64 grains, while the fifty centavos issue was coined of .750 fine silver and weighed half as much.

However, is that reason enough to collect to Commonwealth Commemoratives as United States coins? This writer believes so. Being a collector of USA numismatica almost exclusively, it is his opinion that the entire series of United States coinage for the Philippines comprises an almost completely overlooked area of type and date collecting for those with an interest in United States coins. With the ever growing popularity of U.S. commemoratives, the Commonwealth coins of 1936, struck under the authority of the USA and boldly carrying the legend UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, should be recognized for what they are -- America's forgotten commemoratives.

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Photos by Stephen M. Huston

SAN FRANCISCO THROUGH ITS TOKENS: U.S. BEER HALL

by Jerry F. Schimmel

This 28mm brass token advertises the U.S. BEER HALL on the N.W. COR. of MISSION & 16TH STS. JOHN WIESE is the proprietor, and the token is GOOD FOR A 5c DRINK. In tiny letters is the maker's name, c.a. klinker & co. s.f.



The City Directories show that the establishment was located at 1940 Mission Street from 1881 until the earthquake in 1906. After that time, it moved just around the corner to 3036-16th Street, where it remained until Prohibition in 1920. In 1921, it officially became a "restaurant" and apparently failed shortly after that, as there are no further listings.

The site is just across the street from the Mission and 16th Street Bay Area Rapid Transit station and is occupied at this writing by a branch of the United California Bank. A five cent drink in those days was often called a "smile", of a half shot of whiskey. The maker's signature suggests that the token was issued between 1890 and 1894.

PLANTATION TOKEN:

(Continued from page 12)

It is indeed our loss that many of these pieces have befallen this tragedy. Tin is a very reactive metal, especially when exposed to very low temperatures. Many of our American Plantation Tokens are corroded and have bumps upon their surfaces which obscure detail. This type of corrosion is known as "tin pest". Thus, few choice pieces are available to collectors.

Once again, it would be to our advantage as collectors to know more about the history of American Plantation Tokens. Perhaps, at a future date we will, but for now it remains our often forgotten piece of history.

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